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**Strategies to increase beef cattle production and  
retain farmer participation in beef cattle farming  
in the Solomon Islands.**

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**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Applied Science  
in Agricultural Systems and Management  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Beef cattle farming in the Solomon Islands is important, it provides meat for domestic consumption, creates, employment for farmers, and is an alternative weed control method for coconut plantations.

Back in 1978, beef cattle numbers were at their highest level (around 25,184 head) and have declined to an estimate of 6,600 in 1996. An annual decline of 7-8% since 1990 led to a shortage in beef cattle production for the local market. This caused concern and led the Solomon Islands' government to consider revitalisation of the beef cattle industry.

This study provides insight into the declining cattle situation, and recommends strategies to improve the beef and to retain farmers participation.

In 1996, a survey was carried out amongst extension workers and beef cattle farmers, and semi-structured interviews of ten key informants from the Malaita and Guadalcanal provinces were conducted. The aim of this research was to obtain an insight in the constraints and problems with the revitalisation of the beef cattle industry.

Common themes were derived from the semi-structured interviews and a data analysis of the two survey questionnaires was carried out using the "SAS" statistical programme at Massey University. The statistical analysis method were descriptive, which included; frequency distributions, cross tabulations and calculations of correlation coefficients.

The study shows that lack of extension support for the cattle industry during the 1980s-1990s contributed to the decline of beef cattle numbers and less farmer participation in the cattle industry.

The Livestock Development Authority's reduction of marketing and production services also contributed towards the decline of the Solomon Islands' cattle industry. Furthermore, the lucrative prices from cashcrops encouraged farmers to go into crop farming and out of beef cattle farming during the 1990s.

Also, the study shows that farmers are still interested in cattle farming and they would like to see that institutional support services are set up to revitalise the cattle industry. Furthermore, farmers and extension workers require adequate training in farm management and animal husbandry to gain a better knowledge of beef cattle farming practices. Also any institutional support for beef cattle development in the future should be more focused on improving the medium and large commercial cattle farming sectors, in order to create sufficient good breeding stock.

In conclusion, this study recommends that improvement of the both smallholder and large commercial sectors is necessary for increase of cattle numbers and farmer participation. The Solomon Islands' cattle industry requires consistent support during its development stages in order to sustain production and consolidate.

**Key Words:** Solomon Islands, extension, beef cattle, agriculture.

**Title:** Strategies to increase beef cattle production and retain farmer participation in cattle farming in the Solomon Islands.

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## **DEDICATION**

In loving memory of my sister Ann Iaipuro who ceased in 1976, while at Su'u Secondary School. For she did not stay on to see the results of her years in school, but today she is enjoying the fellowship with her God in Heaven.

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## **COMMON ABBREVIATIONS USED**

- BGM - Black Gold Management Limited
- CDC - Common Wealth Corporation
- DBSI - Development Bank of the Solomon Islands
- LCL - Livestock Co-orporation Limited
- LDA - Livestock Development Authority
- LPPL - Levers Pacific Plantation Limited
- MAF - Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries
- MET - Ministry of Education & Training
- SICHE - Solomon Islands College of Higher Education
- SIPL - Solomon Islands Plantation Limited
- Std Dev - Standard Deviations
- WW II - World War

## UNITS OF MEASUREMENT USED

Ac - Acre

(AU) \$ - Australian dollar

°C - Degree Celsius

Ha - Hectare

hd - head of cattle

kg - Kilogram

km<sup>2</sup> - Square kilometre

m - Metre

mm - Millimetre

(n = ) - Number of Respondents

S.I \$ - Solomon Islands dollar

% - Percentage